AVATAR

The Last Airbender

Show #317

BOOK THREE: Fire
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: "The Ember Island Players"

Written By

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ACT ONE

(NOTE FOR PREVIOUSLY ON: Be sure to include Lo and Li's set-up from 3.05 about Ember Island's "magic," etc.)

FADE IN:

EXT. FIRELORD'S SUMMER PALACE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Aang and Zuko work on their Firebending in the spacious courtyard of the Firelord's mansion. Katara and Toph sun themselves nearby. Katara looks around at the huge house.

KATARA
Doesn't it seem kind of weird that we're hiding from the Firelord in his own house?

ZUKO
I told you my father hasn't come here since our family was actually happy -- and that was a long time ago. It's the last place anyone would think to look for us.

Sokka and Suki walk into the courtyard.

SOKKA
You guys are not going to believe this! There's a play about us.

SUKI
We were just in town and we found this poster!

Suki reveals a poster showing an epic version of Aang flanked by idealized and muscular versions of Sokka (with his sword) and Katara. Zuko's glowering head looms in the background.

KATARA
What? How is that possible?

SOKKA
Listen to this.

He pulls out a flyer about the play and starts reading.

SOKKA
(reading)
"The Boy in the Iceberg!" is a new production from acclaimed Earth Kingdom playwright Pu-on Tim, who scoured the globe gathering information on the Avatar, from the icy south-pole to the heart of Ba Sing Se. His sources include singing nomads, pirates, prisoners of war, and a surprisingly knowledgable merchant of cabbage!

SUKI
Brought to you by the critically-acclaimed Ember Island Players.

ZUKO
Ugh. My mother used to take us to see them. They butchered "Love Amongst the Dragons" every year.

KATARA
Sokka, do you really think it's a good idea for us to attend a play about ourselves?

The kids exchange unsure looks.

SOKKA
Come on, a day at the theater? This is the kind of wacky time-wasting nonsense I've been missing!

INT. THEATER BALCONY - DAY

The gang, all in appropriate Fire Nation disguises, filters into a row of seats. Toph sits on one side of Katara, and Zuko sits down on the other side. Aang awkwardly stands over him, wanting to be next to Katara.

AANG
Hey, uh, I wanted to sit there.

ZUKO
Just sit next to me. What's the big deal?

Aang stands for another awkward beat.

AANG
I was just, I wanted to...
(resigned)
Okay.

He sits next to Zuko. Sokka sits next to Aang, loaded with snacks from the concession stand, and Suki sits beside him.

TOPH
Why are we sitting in the nosebleed section? My feet can't see a thing from up here.

KATARA
Don't worry, I'll tell your feet what's happening.

The THEATER LIGHTS DIM and the CURTAIN GOES UP.

ONSTAGE, the play opens with ACTOR SOKKA and ACTRESS KATARA sitting in a PROP CANOE. As they mime paddling, an icy background SCROLLS behind them, simulating movement through the water.

ACTRESS KATARA
(SIGHS) Sokka, my only brother, we constantly roam these icy South Pole seas, and yet never do we find anything... fulfilling.

ACTOR SOKKA
All I want is a full-feeling in my stomach! I'm starving!

The AUDIENCE LAUGHS at his lame joke.

ACTRESS KATARA
Is food the only thing on your mind?

ACTOR SOKKA
Well, I'm trying to get it out of my mind... and into my mouth! I'm starving!

The audience ROARS WITH LAUGHTER again. IN THE BALCONY, Sokka looks on with outrage.

SOKKA
This is pathetic! My jokes are way funnier than this!

Toph giggles happily.

TOPH
(LAUGHING) I think he's got you pegged.

ONSTAGE, the Katara actress improbably stands up in the canoe and begins a stirring soliloquy.

ACTRESS KATARA
Every day the world awaits a beacon to guide us, yet none appears. Still, we cannot give up hope. For hope...
(getting choked up)
is all we have! And we must never relinquish it. Even... (SOB) Even to our dying breath! (CRYING)

She sinks back down into the canoe and starts to cry. IN THE BALCONY, all the kids are giggling at the over-earnest portrayal of Katara. She rolls her eyes, insulted.

KATARA
Well, that's just silly. I don't sound like that.

TOPH
(GIGGLING) Oh, man. This writer's a genius.

ONSTAGE, as Sokka and Katara paddle the fake canoe, a giant clear plastic-looking ICEBERG wheels onstage. A GLOWING FIGURE can be seen inside.

ACTRESS KATARA
It appears to be someone frozen in ice, perhaps for a hundred years.

ACTOR SOKKA
But who? Who is the boy in the iceberg?

Katara hops out of the canoe onto the iceberg.

ACTRESS KATARA
(taking a deep breath)
Waterbend, hi-yah!

She does a stagy version of Waterbending, which looks like crazy-magic-voodoo karate, to crack open the iceberg. It slowly opens to reveal the ACTRESS AANG, a little woman in a bald cap (think Sandy Duncan as Peter Pan).

Next to her is APPA, portrayed by a Chinese New Year's dragon-looking beast with several people inside. Aang's eyes slowly flicker open, and she smiles. Katara and Sokka look at her with wonder.

ACTRESS KATARA
Who are you, frozen boy?

ACTRESS AANG
(GIGGLES) I'm the Avatar, silly, here to spread joy and fun!

She puts on hand on her hip, sticks the other one out in a "flying" pose, and is lifted awkwardly over the stage on wires as the Appa-dragon runs around the stage excitedly.

IN THE BALCONY, Aang looks on, aghast.

AANG
Wait, is that a woman playing me?

ONSTAGE, Katara actress gasps in amazement.

ACTRESS KATARA
An Airbender! My heart is so full of hope that it's making me tear-bend! (CRYING)

She starts to blubber.

ACTOR SOKKA
My stomach is so empty that it's making me tear-bend. I need meat!

Aang sets down on the stage next to Sokka.

ACTRESS AANG
But wait, is that a platter of meaty dumplings?

He points behind Sokka, who wheels around to look behind him.

ACTOR SOKKA
Ooh. Where? Where?

Aang collapses on the stage, laughing.

ACTRESS AANG
(GIDDY LAUGHTER) Did I mention that I'm an incurable prankster?

IN THE BALCONY, Aang still looks on with outrage.

AANG
I don't do that! That's not what I'm like! And I'm not a woman!

Toph is rolling with laughter.

TOPH
(LAUGHING) Oh, they nailed you, twinkle-toes!

ONSTAGE, the actor versions of Katara, Aang and Sokka canoe off the stage with Appa trailing behind. As they leave, a prop FIRE NATION SHIP wheels out onstage, with a ACTOR ZUKO and an ACTOR UNCLE on the deck. Uncle is gigantically obese and lies in a deck chair, drinking tea and eating cake off of a plate that rests on his massive belly. The Zuko actor looks a lot like the real Zuko, except his scar is on the wrong side of his face.

ACTOR UNCLE
Prince Zuko, you must try this cake.

ACTOR ZUKO
I don't have time to stuff my face. I must capture the Avatar to regain my honor!

ACTOR UNCLE
Well, while you do that, maybe I'll capture another slice.

ACTOR ZUKO
You sicken me.

IN THE BALCONY, Zuko turns to the kids.

ZUKO
They make me look totally stiff and humorless.

KATARA
Actually, I think that actor's pretty spot-on.

Zuko turns to her, angry.

ZUKO
How could you say that?!

ONSTAGE, the Uncle actor still lies in his deck chair.

ACTOR UNCLE
Let's forget about the Avatar and get massages.

The Zuko actor turns to Uncle in exactly the same way the real Zuko just looked at Toph.

ZUKO
How could you say that?!

IN THE BALCONY the kids all smile at Zuko, who fumes at his portrayal.

FADE TO:

ONSTAGE CLIPS MONTAGE

At the Air Temple actress Aang sees something.

ACTRESS AANG
Hey look! I think I found something.

She reaches into a bush and when she comes out she has a MOMO PUPPET on her arm.

ACTRESS AANG
It's a flying rabbit-monkey. I think I'll name him... Momo! (GIDDY LAUGHTER)

Then she uses the Momo puppet to talk, providing the voice with bad ventriloquism.

ACTRESS AANG
(in a high "Momo" voice)
Hi everybody. I love you.

DISSOLVE TO:

While ACTRESS SUKI stands on a DOJO SET, Sokka walks onstage wearing a Kyoshi Warrior costume.

ACTOR SOKKA
Does this dress make my butt look fat?

The audience HOWLS with laughter. In the balcony, Suki giggles at Sokka, who shakes his head, disgusted.

DISSOLVE TO:

The actors stand on a THRONE ROOM SET with an old ACTOR KING BUMI.

ACTOR KING BUMI
Riddles and challenges must you face, if you are ever to leave this place!

DISSOLVE TO:

The kid actors run around in a circle on stage, chased by some colorfully dressed PIRATES.

ACTOR SOKKA
(to Katara)
Why did you have to steal that Waterbending scroll?

ACTRESS KATARA
(through tears)
It just gave me so much hope!

DISSOLVE TO:

Actor Zuko has Aang chained up.

ACTOR ZUKO
The Avatar is mine!
(wheeling around)
Wait, who's coming?

An ACTOR BLUE SPIRIT runs onstage.

ACTOR BLUE SPIRIT
I'm the Blue Spirit, the scourge of the Fire Nation, here to save the Avatar!

ACTRESS AANG
My hero!

In the balcony, Aang and Zuko exchange a "huh?" look.

DISSOLVE TO:

Actress Katara, CRYING AGAIN, is held by a buff ACTOR JET.

ACTOR JET
Don't cry, baby. Jet will wipe out that nasty town for you.

ACTRESS KATARA
Oh, Jet. You're sooo bad.

DISSOLVE TO:

The kids "fly" on Appa and look down.

ACTRESS AANG
Look, it's the Great Divide, the biggest canyon in the Earth Kingdom!

ACTOR SOKKA
Eh. Let's keep flying.

DISSOLVE TO:

The assault on the North Pole takes place on a NORTH POLE SET, with papier-mâché ice blocks flying around and some actual Firebending going on. Actor Sokka holds ACTRESS YUE in his arms.

ACTOR SOKKA
Don't go, Yue. You're the only woman who's ever taken my mind off of food.

He kisses her, then draws back, smacking his lips.

ACTOR SOKKA
Wait, did you have pickled fish for dinner?

ACTRESS YUE
Good-bye Sokka. I have important moon duties to take care of.

ONSTAGE, Yue is lifted up on wires onto a moon prop which descends from the ceiling.

ACTRESS YUE
(as she rises)
And yes, I did have pickled fish.

In the balcony, Suki looks over at Sokka playfully.

SUKI
You never told me you made out with the Moon Spirit.

SOKKA
(engrossed in the play)
Shhh. I'm trying to watch.

Sokka watches from the balcony, enraptured and a little moved by the recreation of the loss of his first love.

DISSOLVE TO:

Aang Actor has been transformed into the Ocean Spirit, which she plays in a giant Godzilla-like suit with stilts and black lighting that makes her arrows look like they're glowing. She stomps around the stage on some miniature boats, wrecking the Fire Nation fleet, and holding a "Zhao doll" which she TOSSES aside.

ACTRESS AANG
(GIGGLING) The Avatar is back to save the day! Yay!

All the kids look on from the balcony, blown away by what they've seen, as the curtain comes down on the stage.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. THEATER LOBBY - DAY

The play has just paused for intermission. The kids discuss their onstage depictions with bitterness.

ZUKO
So far, this intermission is the best part of the play.

SOKKA
Apparently, the playwright thinks I'm an idiot who tells bad jokes about meat all the time.

SUKI
(teasing)
Yeah, you tell bad jokes about plenty of other topics.

SOKKA
I know!

AANG
At least the Sokka actor kind of looks like you. That woman playing the Avatar doesn't resemble me at all.

TOPH
I don't know, you are more in touch with your feminine side than most guys.

Aang joins Sokka in the same angry pose.

KATARA
Relax, Aang. They're not accurate portrayals. It's not like I'm a preachy crybaby who can't resist giving over-emotional speeches about hope all the time.
(beat)
What?

She pauses and looks around her friends. They're all staring at her, not saying a word.

AANG
(deadpan)
Yeah. That's not you at all.

Katara sees through his lie and gets flustered. Toph again takes delight in her friends' humiliation.

TOPH
Listen, friends: It's obvious that the playwright did his research. I know it must hurt, but what you're seeing up there on that stage is the truth.

At that moment, the torches in the lobby FLICKER on and off, indicating the intermission is ending.

She elbows Aang and Katara in the ribs playfully and heads back to her seat with glee.

INT. THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

Toph sits with her hands tightly clasped in anticipation as the actors deliver some story exposition on stage.

ACTRESS KATARA
Well, here we are in the Earth Kingdom.

ACTRESS AANG
I better have a look around to see if I can find an Earthbending teacher.

She points her arm out in her "flying" pose and is lifted up on her wires. As she "flies" all the way around the stage, Toph leans forward, excited.

TOPH
This is it! This must be where I come in!

ONSTAGE, the Aang actor lands, looking dejected.

ACTRESS AANG
I flew all over town, but I couldn't find a single Earthbending master!

TOPH
Here it comes...

To the kids' surprise, a large and muscular man -- ACTOR TOPH -- is RAISED UP through a trapdoor.

ACTOR TOPH
You can't find an Earthbending master in the sky -- you have to look underground!

IN THE SEATS, Aang, Sokka, and Katara try to STIFLE LAUGHTER.

ACTRESS AANG
Who are you?

The Toph actor strikes an ultra-manly pose and spits.

ACTOR TOPH
My name's "Toph." Because it sounds like "tough".
(beat)
And that's just what I am.

TOPH
Wait a minute. I sound like... a guy. A really buff GUY.

Katara leans over to give Toph some payback.

KATARA
Well, Toph... What you hear up there is the truth. It hurts, doesn't it?

TOPH
Are you kidding me? I wouldn't have cast it any other way!
(laughing)
At least it's not a flyin' bald lady.

Aang shoots her an ugly glare. ONSTAGE, the Toph and Aang characters continue to get to know each other.

ACTRESS AANG
So, you're... blind?

He waves his hand in front of the Toph actor's face.

ACTOR TOPH
(CHUCKLES) I can see you doing that. I see everything that you see. Except, I don't "see" like you do... I release a sonic wave from my mouth.

He takes a deep breath and demonstrates.

ACTOR TOPH (cont'd)
(DEAFENING SHRIEK)

The kids cover their ears.

ACTOR TOPH (cont'd)
(satisfied)
There. I got a pretty good look at you.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE:

The kids look increasingly embarrassed as they watch scene after scene re-enacting their adventures:

The Zuko character is now wearing a wig and having a heartfelt conversation with Uncle.

ACTOR UNCLE
Zuko, it's time we had a talk. About your hair... It's gone too far!

ACTOR ZUKO
Maybe it's best if we... split up.

They bow to each other and exit the stage.

DISSOLVE TO:

Azula fights the kids and Zuko in a ghost town standoff.

ACTOR ZUKO (cont'd)
Azula, My sister! What are you doing here?

ACTRESS AZULA
(guiltily)
You caught me.
(pointing behind him)
Wait! What's that? I think it's your honor!

ACTOR ZUKO
Where?!

As Zuko and the rest of the kids turn around to look for Zuko's honor, Azula scurries down the trap door. The kids turn back to find her gone.

ACTRESS KATARA
She escaped. But how?

The trap door in the floor of the stage pulls shut just a little too late.

DISSOLVE TO:

A large papier-mâché drill moves VERY slowly across the stage, with two pairs of feet showing underneath. It shakes, appearing to bore through a large towering wall at the end of the stage.

ACTRESS AANG
If she continues drilling, this wall will come down for sure!

ACTRESS AZULA
Yes! Continue drilling! The city of Ba Sing Se can hide no longer.

The drill continues to shake the prop wall for an inordinate amount of time. Some of the audience members begin yawning.

END MONTAGE

INT. THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

Now a man dressed as Jet (long, scruffy hair and a piece of straw in his mouth) is facing off with the kids. His hands have been replaced with two sharp MEAT HOOKS. He wears a pair of fake eye-goggles, with SPIRALLING SHAPES in the lenses, suggesting Jet has been hypnotized.

ACTRESS AANG
No, Jet! What did they do to you?

ACTOR JET
Must... serve... Earth King.

He swings one of the meat hooks wildly.

ACTOR JET (cont'd)
Must... Destrooooooyyy...

At that moment, an effects technician drops a big papier-mâché BOULDER from a catwalk above the stage. It falls on Jet. The Jet actor awkwardly tries to disappear through the trap door in the floor (to give the illusion that he's been crushed). The audience seems puzzled.

ZUKO
Did Jet just... die?

SOKKA
You know, it was really unclear.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

The stage is now dressed to look like the crystal catacombs of Ba Sing Se. Katara and Zuko are all alone in the cave.

ACTRESS KATARA
I have to admit, Prince Zuko... I really find you attractive.

The Zuko actor explodes defensively.

ACTOR ZUKO
You don't have to make fun of me!

The Katara actress grabs him and caresses his scar.

ACTRESS KATARA
But I mean it. I've had eyes for you since the day you first captured me.

IN THE BALCONY, Aang looks at Katara accusingly. She pretends not to notice.

ONSTAGE, the Zuko actor warily pulls away from the Katara actress.

ACTOR ZUKO
Wait... I thought you were the Avatar's girl.

IN THE BALCONY Aang glares at Katara as if to say, "yeah!"

ACTRESS KATARA
(amused)
The Avatar? Why he's like a little brother to me. (SLIGHT CHUCKLE) I certainly don't think of him in a romantic way.

IN THE BALCONY, Aang looks at Katara with big, sad eyes as the actress portraying her puts her arms around Zuko.

ACTRESS KATARA (cont'd)
Besides, how could he ever find out about... this?

The two characters engage in a lover's embrace. IN THE SEATS, Aang has finally had enough. He gets up to leave. Nobody notices but Sokka.

SOKKA
Oh, you're getting up?

Aang scoots past Sokka with tears welling in his eyes. Sokka remains oblivious to his pain.

SOKKA (cont'd)
Can you get me some fireflakes?

Aang continues to pout his way toward the end of the aisle. After a beat, Sokka calls after him again.

SOKKA (cont'd)
Oh, and fire gummies!

ON STAGE -- the Zuko actor is now standing between his uncle and sister, trying to decide which path to take.

ACTRESS AZULA
Well, my brother, what's it going to be? Your nation... or a life of treachery?

Zuko is swayed to her side of the stage.

ACTOR UNCLE
Choose treachery -- it's more fun!

Zuko is swayed back over to Uncle's side of the stage.

ACTRESS AZULA
(commanding)
No way!

Zuko looks back at his sister. A smile washes over his face. He nods to Azula... then turns and SHOVES his uncle to the ground.

ACTOR ZUKO
I hate you, Uncle. You smell, and I hate you for all time!

IN THE SEATS, most of the audience APPLAUDS the Zuko character's decision. Katara turns to Zuko, who has a very somber expression on his face.

KATARA
You didn't really say that, did you?

Zuko, now a little choked up, looks down at the floor.

ZUKO
I might as well have.

They turn back to the play, where Azula, Mai, and Ty Lee are now storming the palace at Ba Sing Se. They move with hot, graceful prowess (like Charlie's Angels). Ty Lee taps an Earthbender on the shoulder, and he collapses to the ground. Mai throws a STILETTO, which is carried by a guy in an all black leotard across the stage. The target Earthbender waits patiently for the knife to arrive... then pretends to be mortally wounded as he falls to the ground.

ACTRESS AANG
Avatar state, yip-yip!

The Aang actress strikes a heroic pose and begins rising up in the air.

ACTRESS AZULA
Not if my lightning can help it.

Actress Azula takes aim and then fires LIGHTNING -- depicted here by cheesy BLUE STREAMERS shooting from her fingertips. Aang flutters back down the ground in a lifeless heap.

ACTRESS AZULA
The Avatar... is no more!

The entire audience erupts in APPLAUSE as Azula and her ladies celebrate on stage.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

The kids and theater-goers shuffle into the lobby for the second intermission.

SUKI
It seems like every time there's a big battle you guys barely make it out alive. I mean, you guys lose a lot!

SOKKA
You're one to talk, Suki, didn't Azula take you captive? That's right, she did.

SUKI
Are you trying to get on my bad side?

SOKKA
I'm just saying.

As the kids continue through the lobby, Katara looks around:

KATARA
Does anyone know where Aang is?

SOKKA
He left to get me fire gummies like ten minutes ago -- and I'm still waiting!

KATARA
I'm going to check outside.

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

Katara exits the theater and sees Aang sitting on the adjacent beach, sulking. She approaches him.

KATARA
Are you alright?

AANG
No I'm not. I hate this play!

Katara sits next to him.

KATARA
I know it's upsetting, but it sounds like you're overreacting.

AANG
Overreacting? If I hadn't blocked my chakra, I'd probably be in the Avatar state right now!

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Toph, Zuko, Suki and Sokka stand together.

LITTLE AANG
WEEEEEEEEEE!

SOKKA
Suki, what are the chances you can get me backstage? I got some jokes I want to give to the actor me.

Suki scans the backstage entrance.

SUKI
(dramatic)
I'm an elite warrior who's trained for many years in the art of stealth.
(then simply)
I think I can get you backstage.

The two head backstage, leaving Zuko and Toph alone.

TOPH
Geez, everyone's getting so upset about their characters. Even you seem more down than usual. And that's saying something.

Zuko shakes his head.

ZUKO
You don't get it, it's different for you. You get a muscly version of yourself taking down ten bad guys at once, and making sassy remarks.

TOPH
Yeah, that's pretty great.

ZUKO
But for me, it takes all the mistakes I've made in my life and shoves them back in my face.
(beat)
My uncle...
(MORE)

ZUKO (cont'd)
he's always been on my side. Even when things were bad, he was there for me. He taught me so much -- and how do I repay him? With a knife in the back.
(ashamed)
It's my greatest regret... and I may never get to redeem myself.

Toph is silent. It doesn't take a person with sight to realize the pain Zuko is going through.

TOPH
You have redeemed yourself to your uncle. You don't realize it, but you already have.

ZUKO
How do you know?

TOPH
Because I once had a long conversation with the guy and all he would talk about was you.

Zuko perks up.

ZUKO
Really?

TOPH
Yeah, and it was kind of annoying.

ZUKO
Oh, sorry.

TOPH
But it was also very sweet.
(beat)
All your uncle wanted was for you to find your own path and see the light. Now you're here with us. He'd be proud.

As this sinks-in, a smile crosses Zuko's face -- she's right. Toph punches Zuko in the arm again.

ZUKO
Ow! What was that for?

TOPH
That's how I show affection.

Just then a KID walks up to Zuko and points at him.

KID
Your Zuko costume's pretty good,
but your scar's on the wrong side.

The kid runs away and Zuko yells after him.

ZUKO
The scar is not on the wrong side!

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Sokka and Suki are sneaking around when they see Actor Sokka heading towards them.

SUKI
He's coming this way!

Sokka jumps in his path. There is a beat when the two Sokkas are face to face.

ACTOR SOKKA
Can I help you?

SOKKA
Actually, I think I can help you.
I'm a big Sokka fan but I don't
think you're representing him quite
as well as you could be.

Sokka pulls out a stack of cards. The Sokka actor notices the cards and rolls his eyes.

ACTOR SOKKA
Oh no, another fan with ideas.

SOKKA
Just hear me out.

Sokka flips through his cards and finds a joke he likes.

SOKKA (cont'd)
Here's something I think the real
Sokka would say.
(selling the joke)
What does the cabbage merchant use
to fix his cabbages? A cabbage
patch!

ACTOR SOKKA
(CHUCKLES) That's actually pretty
good. Let me see those.

The actor takes the stack of cards and reads through them.

ACTOR SOKKA (cont'd)
Ha! A rocky relationship. Not bad.

SOKKA
Also, don't be afraid to make up some phrases, especially before an attack. Something like:
(yelling)
Flying-kick-a-pow!

The Sokka actor is impressed but then looks at Sokka suspiciously.

ACTOR SOKKA
Who are you anyway?

SOKKA
I'm just a guy who likes comedy.

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

Katara sits next to Aang, who is clearly still moody.

AANG
Katara, did you really mean what you said in there?

KATARA
In where? What are you talking about?

AANG
On stage! When you said I was just like a brother to you and you didn't have feelings for me.

KATARA
I didn't say that, an actor said that.

AANG
But it's true, isn't it? We kissed at the invasion, and I thought we were going to be together. But we're not.

Katara searches for the right words.

KATARA
Aang, I don't know...

AANG
Why don't you know?

KATARA
Because we're in the middle of a war, and we have other things to worry about. This isn't the right time.

AANG
Well, when is the right time?

KATARA
Aang, I'm sorry, but right now I'm just a little confused.

The two are silent. Katara thinks Aang understands, then... Aang leans in to kiss Katara! Katara quickly pulls away.

KATARA
I just said I was confused!
(beat)
I'm going inside.

Katara walks away. Aang is upset with himself.

AANG
Ahh! I'm such an idiot!

Aang plops down in the sand and throws shells into the ocean.

INT. THEATER - LATER

The kids are already sitting watching the play when Aang enters. He awkwardly sits in an open seat between Sokka and Katara.

SOKKA
(whispering to Aang)
Here's what you missed: we went to the Fire Nation, and you got better, and Katara was the painted lady, and I got a sword and I think combustion man died.
(noticing on stage)
Ooh look, the invasion's about to start! Shhh!

Just then Aang looks ONSTAGE and sees...

The actors act out a scene that takes place on top of the submarine, moments before the invasion.

(This is the scene from 3.10 where Aang kisses Katara). The actors playing Katara and Aang share an intimate moment:

ACTRESS KATARA
I just want to let you know Aang, that I'll always love you... like a brother.

ACTRESS AANG
(cheesy happy)
I wouldn't want it any other way.

They give each other a HANDSHAKE before Aang flies away.

IN HIS CHAIR, Aang slinks down and covers his face, embarrassed.

BACK ON STAGE, the Sokka actor and Toph actor appear in the submarine set.

ACTOR SOKKA
Hey Toph, would you say you and Aang have a rocky relationship?!

IN HIS CHAIR, Sokka CRACKS-UP LAUGHING. He turns to Aang.

SOKKA
(whispering)
I told him to say that.

BACK ON STAGE, we see the Sokka actor continue talking:

ACTOR SOKKA (cont'd)
I hope everyone's ready for the invasion. Slap-a-pow!

ONSTAGE, the actors playing our kids rush into a set of the Fire Nation palace.

ACTRESS AANG
We've finally made it to the Royal Palace but no one's home!

Just then, the actor playing Zuko appears.

ACTOR ZUKO
Actually, I'm home. And I want to join you!

ACTOR SOKKA
I guess we have no choice. Come on!

All the actors exit the stage and the lights go to black. IN THEIR SEATS, the kids look to each other.

SOKKA
I guess that's it. The play's caught up to the present now.

Suddenly, a spot-light turns on. It's shining on something hanging over the stage -- a papier-mâché comet.

SUKI
Wait, the play's not over.

SOKKA
(confused)
But it is over. Unless...
(mysterious)
This is the future.

The lights come back on and we see the Firelord actor sitting on his throne looking up at the comet.

ACTOR FIRELORD
With the energy harnessed from that comet, no one will be able to stop the Fire Nation.

A moment later, the actress playing Azula enters.

ACTRESS AZULA
Father, Zuko and the Avatar are at the palace. They are trying to stop you!

ACTOR FIRELORD
You take care of Zuko, I shall face the Avatar myself.

The Azula actress rushes off stage as the lights fade to black. A moment later, the lights fade back up and we see the set is now a different location in the royal palace. The Zuko and Aang actors are looking around when the Azula actress appears.

ACTOR ZUKO
(to Aang actor)
Aang, you find the Firelord, I'll hold her off.

The Aang actor runs off stage and the Azula and Zuko actors face off.

ACTRESS AZULA
You are no longer my brother, you are an enemy.

ACTOR ZUKO
No. I am the rightful heir to the throne.

ACTRESS AZULA
We'll see...

The two begin to have a dramatic on-stage fight. The special effects include fire, strobe lights, dramatic music and choreographed stage fighting. In the end, Azula defeats her brother.

ACTOR ZUKO
Honor!!

The lights fade down. The kids are stunned silent. The lights fade back on. We are now looking onto the Firelord's throne room. Just then the Aang actor rushes in.

ACTOR FIRELORD
So you have mastered all four elements?

ACTRESS AANG
Yeah, and now you're going down.

ACTOR FIRELORD
No, it's you who are going down. You see, you are too late -- the comet is already here, and I'm unstoppable.

The Aang actor is SHOCKED as he looks up at the comet. The Firelord actor sends an attack at the Aang actor starting their fight.

This is the true climax of the show and it is visually stunning with great effects and cool choreography. The Aang character flies around the set, tattoos and eyes glowing, trying to fight the Firelord. But the Firelord is too powerful. In the end, the Avatar is defeated -- he is slowly and dramatically lowered down the trap door.

ACTRESS AANG
No!

The Azula actress enters the set a moment later and sees that her father has defeated the Avatar.

ACTRESS AZULA
It is over father, we've done it.

ACTOR FIRELORD
Yes, we have done it. The dreams of my father, and my father's father, have now been realized -- the world is mine.

Just then, the curtain falls and the lights in the theater turn on. The audience CHEERS and even gives the show a standing ovation. Meanwhile our characters sit IN THEIR SEATS, shell-shocked.

EXT. EMBER ISLAND - NIGHT

The kids trudge home in silence, unnerved by what they've just seen. They all avoid eye contact with each other. Aang in particular slumps his shoulders and looks burdened and disturbed by what he's just seen.

EXT. FIRELORD'S SUMMER PALACE - PORCH - NIGHT

The kids walk up to and sit on the porch, still shell-shocked. Finally Zuko speaks up:

ZUKO
That wasn't a good play.

AANG/ KATARA/ SUKI/ TOPH
I'll say./ No kidding./ Horrible./ You said it.

SOKKA
But the effects were decent.

END OF SHOW